



NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT

Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 10, 2010

March is Declared Mediation Month for Nebraska

The Nebraska Supreme Court Office of Dispute Resolution kicked off the celebration of mediation month in Nebraska with a proclamation signing by Governor Dave Heineman at the State Capitol the morning of March 10. The ceremony, attended by mediation professionals and supporters, recognized more than 18 years of conflict resolution services provided by the Nebraska Office of Dispute Resolution, ODR-approved mediation centers, their affiliate mediators, and other public and private mediators throughout the state.

Arranging the kick-off was Ms. Debora Brownyard, Esq., Nebraska Supreme Court Office of Dispute Resolution (ODR) Director. "This recognition is an honor for mediation supporters across the state," said Brownyard. "With mediation services, Nebraska's mediation centers strive to help people achieve and maintain self determination in their lives, preserve relationships between people, and eliminate the strain of avoidable litigation. We believe that, in the end, it is relationships that matter."

Mediation is a process which brings disputing parties together to resolve their conflicts and to produce solutions which are acceptable and beneficial to everyone involved. It is a structured but informal process conducted by one or more trained neutral individuals who assist the parties gain agreement.

A typical mediation session lasts from one to three hours and is especially effective in resolving disputes in areas such as labor/management, neighborhood conflicts, divorce, consumer/merchant, landlord/tenant, and small claims cases. Mediation offers participants a less expensive, less combative, and less time-consuming alternative to litigation.

The Supreme Court of Nebraska established the Office of Dispute Resolution following the Legislature's passage of the Nebraska Dispute Resolution Act of 1991. The office was established to provide information, education and program development guidance, and works to integrate alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services within local courts and communities.

The Office of Dispute Resolution oversees six approved non-profit mediation centers:

The Resolution Center, Beatrice
The Mediation Center, Lincoln
Nebraska Justice Center, Fremont
Concord Center, Omaha
Central Mediation Center, Kearney
Mediation West (formerly Center for Conflict Resolution), Scottsbluff

An important court-connected mediation partner with ODR is the Douglas County District Court Conciliation and Mediation Office in Omaha.

An 11-member ODR Advisory Council, comprised of Nebraska Supreme Court-appointed representatives from the District Court Judges Association, the County Court Judges Association, the Nebraska State Bar Association, social workers, mental health professionals, educators and others, together with ODR and the mediation centers, constitutes Nebraska's coordinated system for providing easily accessible and competent dispute resolution services for all Nebraskans.

Noteworthy news for Nebraska is the recently launched Nebraska Mediation Association (NMA). NMA invites mediators and mediation supporters from all backgrounds and persuasions to join together to advance and sustain quality conflict resolution, mediation, and consensus building. NMA is holding its inaugural luncheon, education forum, and membership meeting at the Happy Hollow Country Club in Omaha on Friday, April 23. Professor Arthur Pearlstein, Director of Creighton's Werner Institute for Negotiation and Conflict Resolution is speaking on the topic "Is Mediation a Profession or a Social Movement?" For information on how to join as a member or to register, see this link:
http://www.nemediation.org/inaugural_event.htm

For more information, contact the Office of Dispute Resolution:

Debora Brownyard, Director
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Or the mediation center in your area: <http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/mediation/index.shtml?sub7>

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Photos on following page



Mediation Month dignitaries-- Back row: Carl Eskridge, Chair, Office of Dispute Resolution Advisory Council, Lincoln; Jane Martin-Hoffman, Director, Nebraska Justice Center, Fremont; Suresh Namala, Supreme Court Technology; Mike Pirtle, Vice-Chair, ODR Advisory Council, Omaha. Front row: Judy Pingel, Director, The Resolution Center, Beatrice; Debora Brownyard, Nebraska Supreme Court Office of Dispute Resolution Director; State Court Administrator Janice Walker.



Enjoying Mediation Month Proclamation Signing Ceremony – Left to Right: Judy Pingel, Director, The Resolution Center, Beatrice; Debora Brownyard, Nebraska Supreme Court Office of Dispute Resolution Director; State Court Administrator Janice Walker; Carl Eskridge, Chair, Office of Dispute Resolution Advisory Council, Lincoln; Jane Martin-Hoffman, Director, Nebraska Justice Center, Fremont; Suresh Namala, Supreme Court Technology; Mike Pirtle, Vice-Chair, ODR Advisory Council, Omaha.